

Workers Wellbeing Webinar

Supporting staff in the Women and Girls
sector

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& Heather Stradling

Wednesday 8th July 2020
11am – 1pm

The Women and Girls Initiative is made possible by The National Lottery Community Fund.



Agenda

- 11-11.10am: Welcome, introductions and logistics
- 11.10-11.25: What influences staff wellbeing? – policies and practice
- 11.25-11.40: Supporting staff through systemic and reflective practice
- 11.40-12.05: Self-care practice: Working with breath (need to change)
- 12.05-12.25: Breakout room discussions
- 12.25-12.50: Main room discussion – comments, questions, reflections
- 12.50-1pm: Wrap up and close



What influences staff wellbeing?

Heather Stradling,
Tavistock Institute



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What influences staff wellbeing?

- Health – physical and mental health and safety
- Good work – environment, line management, work demands, autonomy, change management, pay and reward
- Values/Principles – Leadership, ethical standards, diversity and inclusion
- Collective/Social – employee voice, collective performance
- Personal growth – career development, emotional, lifelong learning, creativity
- Good lifestyle choices – physical activity, healthy eating
- Financial well-being – Fair pay and benefit policies, retirement planning, employee financial support (including signposting)
 - The key domains of wellbeing, identified by CIPD (2020).



What needs to be considered?

By employers, senior leaders & managers, HR:

(NICE, 2016)

- 1) Organisational commitment
 - 2) Work environment
 - 3) Equality and engagement
 - 4) Senior Leadership
 - 5) Role and leadership style of managers
 - 6) Job design
 - 7) Monitoring and evaluation
 - 8) Training
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Evidence-based practice



- Cause and effect is difficult to determine
 - E.g. Job performance versus job satisfaction
- Therefore, it's important to:
 - Look at scientific evidence
 - Use your expertise and experience
 - Review organisational data
 - Gain stakeholder views, opinions and feelings

A few considerations for leaders and managers



Job, role and task design



The difference between policy and practice – the unspoken expectations



The importance of role-modelling



Trauma-informed staff support

- Fight, flight, freeze, flop or fawn responses
- Role of vicarious trauma and/or re-triggering of trauma
- Potential for post-traumatic growth (Cohen & Collens, 2013)
- Trauma is held in the body (Van der Kolk, 2014)



RESPECT Model (Dunkley, 2018)

- R - Relaxation
- E - Education
- S - Social
- P - Physical
- E - Exercise
- C - Creativity
- T - Thinking



Trauma-informed staff support

- Creating space in the agenda of meetings
- Offering reflective spaces and encouraging peer support
- Normalising self-care practice and introducing it into work life e.g. grounding techniques
- Opportunities for play, creativity and humour
- Signposting to other support
- Being a champion for the importance of self-care



References

- Cohen, K., Collens, P. (2013). The impact of trauma work on trauma workers: A metasynthesis on vicarious trauma and vicarious posttraumatic growth. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 5(6), 570-580.
- CIPD, (2020). [Well-being at work factsheet and other resources](#). CIPD: London
- Daisley, B (Host). (2019, Jan 7). [Eat, sleep, work, repeat: Evidence based management – Rob Briner](#) [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>.
- Barends, E., Rousseau, D. M., Briner, R.B. (2014). [Evidence based management: The basic principles](#). Center for Evidence based Management: Amsterdam.
- British Psychological Society, (2017). [Psychology at work: Improving wellbeing and productivity in the workplace](#). BPS: Leicester.
- Dunkley, F. (2018). [RESPECT - resilience toolkit blog series](#).
- National Workforce Skills Development Unit (2019). [Workforce stress and the supportive organisation](#). Health Education England: Leeds.
- Van Der Kolk, B., (2014). The body keeps the score: Brain, mind and body in the healing of trauma. Viking: New York.



Other useful resources

- <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/thrive-inside> - free meditation app for adults and children – great for getting started with meditation
- [Public Health England Covid-19: Psychological First Aid training](#)
- [Help Through Crisis briefing: Promoting staff wellbeing to improve frontline crisis support](#)
- [Post-slavery syndrome: exploring the clinical impact of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade](#) – a set of talks online from 2019, free to watch until end July 2020.



Staff support and reflective practice: Some underlying concepts

Camilla Child,
Tavistock Institute



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Why reflective groups

- Provides support for staff by providing a space to feel, think about and express their feelings about work together, in relation to the 'primary task' of the organisation
- It helps people to make connections between their life experiences, work, their organisations and the broader system
- It helps staff to get under the surface of what is going on for themselves and their teams and make sense of it; sometimes they are not aware of these in the moment
- It is not 'therapy' but can have therapeutic effects
- Staff can provide practical help to each other

Reflective Practice?

- Reflective practice argues that human problems cannot be resolved by the simple application of technical solutions and people's problems are too complex to be resolved in this way (Thompson, 2002)
- Reflective practice is an approach that moves away from standardised, formula responses
- Rather, reflective practice focuses on complexity, variability and uncertainty associated with working in human services



Reflective Practice

- **Reflective practice** is the capacity to reflect on action in order to learn. (Schon 1983)
- It allows you to be a part of an unfolding drama as well as providing opportunities to be sitting in the audience watching it
- Is about creating awareness of the self in relation to the larger context (the system and environment in which we are working) so that we can work better
- Is about working with the self as instrument
- Offers the opportunity to think and take stock

In work, tasks and emotions are interconnected

- Organisations are always operating at two levels
- The 'task' level (what are we doing and how do we do it?)
- The 'sentient' level (what are my our feelings about it and how are they expressed, the culture, symbols in work, unconscious group forces etc)
- Working at both of these levels is very important to individual and organisational survival

System psychodynamics: systems

- Application of psycho-analytic concepts and systems theory to organisations

From systems theory

- ‘Open’ systems – allow for interactions between internal elements and the environment (feedback loops)
- ‘Closed’ systems – are isolated from their environment

From complexity theory

- Complex adaptive systems - made up of many interacting parts, are nonlinear and self organising with emergent futures

System psychodynamics: dynamics

- Dynamics between organisational members (relating to its main purpose, authority and power relationships)
- Conscious and unconscious forces are enacted in organisations
- Individual experience, including unconscious processes, have both individual and broader group and organisational significance

Containment and holding environment

Containment

- The capacity to internally manage the troubling thoughts and feelings and behaviour that arise as a consequence of stress
- Bion's (1961) process of 'reverie' - a mother's capacity to hold her baby's anxiety, and her own, to continue thinking and offer her presence and availability without rushing too quickly to solution or leaving it too long

Holding environment (Donald Winnicott's 1972)

- A supportive environment which provides a containing space for feelings and allows for risk taking and creativity
- Play, creativity and learning occur through a process of sharing and agreeing meanings in a jointly created space.

Questions and context

- Broad questions can help to open the discussions e.g.
- What is the impact of the work on me, my team and my organisation?
- How do we work together?
- The context is always important to consider:
 - Covid-19
 - Black Lives Matter
 - Lives of women and girls
 - The economic situation
 - Policies

Noticing

- who talks to who about what
- what language is used
- what tone is taken
- who makes decisions
- how people ally themselves
- what assumptions are being made
- how difference is done
- how meaning is made, by whom, to what ends
- what people do and their explanations for this



Developing a critical engagement

What...:

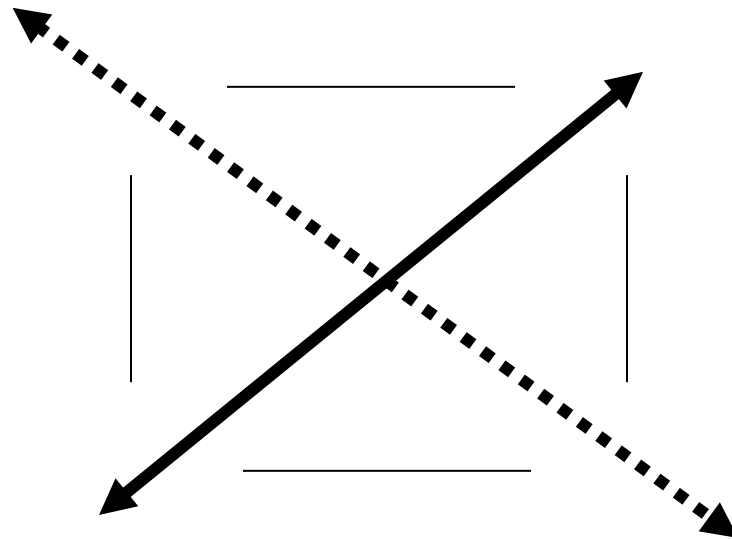
- does this account leave out?
- assumptions support this account?
- would it be like to question this view?
- behaviours am I / are we noticing?
- questions do I need to ask?
- happens when I ask them?
- am I reacting to – my feelings, behaviour, thoughts, hunches?
- where are the dilemmas?



The speaker audience conversation

What is not being said

The speakers account



The listeners interpretation of
the speakers account

The what is going on
(wigo)

Reading

- Menzies Lyth, IEP (1970) *The Functioning of Social Systems as a Defence Against Anxiety*. London: The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations.
<http://moderntimesworkplace.com/archives/ericssess/sessvol1/Lythp439.opd.pdf>
- Obholzer A & Roberts V (2nd Ed 2019) *The Unconscious at Work* Routledge Oxford – this provides a good introduction to much of the work represented in these slides.

Self-care practice: Self-massage and centering with breath

Elena Giannotti



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A vertical garden filled with various green plants, including large heart-shaped leaves and smaller leafy varieties. A neon sign in a cursive font is mounted on the wall, reading "and breathe". The sign is illuminated with a warm, pinkish-orange glow. The background is a dark, textured wall, possibly concrete or stone, which is partially covered by the plants.

and breathe



Thank you!

[Tavistock Institute](#) – links to
all WGI resources



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